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Baptismal Regeneration disproved; The Scripture Account of the Nature of Regeneration explained; and the absolute Necessity of such a Change argued from the Native Corruption of Man since the Fall;

I N A
D I S C O U R S E

On J O H N III. 5, 6.

With R E M A R K S on some Passages in a
late B O O K against

O R I G I N A L S I N ;

A N D A N

A P P E N D I X

Relating to Three different false Descriptions
of R E G E N E R A T I O N delivered in some
Modern B O O K S.

By S A M U E L H E B D E N.

L O N D O N :

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J O H N III. 5, 6.

Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

THE Gospel informs us of a twofold supernatural Birth; *that* of Christ born of a Virgin, and *that* of a Sinner born of the Spirit of God. The *former* was appointed, by divine Wisdom and Grace, with a View to the *latter*: For, when the Time set was fully come^a, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman (and born of a Virgin) as well as made under the Law, that they who were by Nature Children of Wrath (born into the World guilty sinful Creatures) might receive the Adoption of Sons, and be born of the Spirit. — While many, about the Close of the Year, profess to commemorate the Birth of Christ, and religiously observe a particular Day of human Appointment, in Honour and Remembrance of *that*, I judge it not improper, or any way unseasonable, to remind you and myself of the *Nature* and *Necessity* of the *New Birth*; and of the Native Corruption of Man since the Fall, as rendring such a Change absolutely necessary. These things are told us in the

A 2

Words

^a Gal. iv. 4, 5.

4 *A Discourse on John iii. 5, 6.*

Words of the Text, spoken to one *Nicodemus*; who, though a Teacher and Ruler of the *Jewish Church*, was extremely ignorant of this Principle of vital experimental Religion, *the New Birth*. — In the Text we have,

I. The New Birth described.

II. The Necessity of it insisted on.

III. The original Corruption of every one of *Adam's* Descendants strongly asserted, as that from which the Necessity of such a Change arises.

I. The New Birth is here described. What our Lord calls, *ver. 3 and 7*, a being *born again*, or, as the Word ^b properly signifies, a being *born from above*, is here described in the Text by a being *born of Water and the Spirit*. Some will have it that two very different things are here pointed at, *Baptism* and *an internal Renovation*. To be born of Water, say they, is to be truly and ^dduly baptized: To be born of the Spirit, is to be inwardly renewed by the Spirit of God; of which Interpretation the former Branch I except against, as being indeed very *antient* ^c, and *fashionable*, but weak and groundless. The latter Part is unexceptionable.

^b *Ανωθεν*. Whether this Word ever signifies *again*, in any pure classical Author, I am not certain. It's being so used by *Athenagoras*, or any such Writer, is of no Weight. In *Gal. iv. 9*. It seems to denote former *Time*; the latter Part of that Verse may be understood as though the Apostle had wrote, *οις ανωθεν στοιχειοις παλιν δουλευειν θελετε*, *to which former Elements, i. e. Elements of former Times, ye desire again to be in Bondage*.

^c *Justin Martyr* (as well as the following Ecclesiastical Writers) does so interpret the Text, or *ver. 3*. which, regarding the Sense more than the very Words, he quotes thus. “ *Αν μη αναγεννηθητε, & μη εις ελθητε εις την βασιλειαν των υραων.*”

exceptionable. To be born of the Spirit, is indeed to be inwardly renewed by the Spirit of God, whose Influence is, like that of Water, cleansing and purifying; and this spiritual Renovation is sufficient to the saving of a Person, whether he be or be not Partaker of the outward Baptism.

1. Whatever *Regeneration* is, the Spirit of God is the sole Author of it. He does not help a Man to regenerate himself, but takes the Work fully into his own Hands. Else, with what Propriety can the regenerate Person be said to be *born of God*, in Opposition to his being born of Blood, or of the Will of the Flesh, or of the Will of Man. A true Child of God, as such, is *not born of Blood*, he does not become so by a carnal Descent from pious Parents: He is *not born of the Will of the Flesh*, i. e. he is not renewed by the Efficacy and Power of his own carnal corrupt Will; for such is the Will of every one of Mankind while unregenerate: *Again*, he is *not born of the Will of Man*, of any Man whatever. Let Parents, Ministers, Christian Friends, *will* ever so earnestly, and *persuade* ever so pathetically, and *labour* ever so fervently, 'tis all in vain, if the Spirit of the living God will not work. This Spirit of God, or God as working by his Spirit, is the sole Author of that mighty Change which discriminates the regenerate Christian from all others. 'Tis not more certain, that our Acceptance with God, and indeed the whole of our Salvation, depends on the Blood of Christ, as the only meritorious procuring Cause of it ^d, than that the *Regeneration* of every one

^d Mr J. Taylor in his late Book against *Original Sin*, speaks of our own *Virtue* as the sole Ground of our Acceptance with God; and to *Christ* he ascribes no more than a superior Degree of the same Kind of Worthiness that belongs to all good Men, p. 72, 73, &c. *Query*. Whether his Notions of *Virtue* as meritorious,

one who is born again depends upon, and is effected by, the sole Energy of the divine Spirit. O Christian, if thou art indeed born from above, the good Spirit has been at work upon thy Soul, in such a powerful divine Manner, as none but himself is capable of: He has done that *for* thee and *upon* thee, which neither thyself nor any Creature could ever have done. Thy Regeneration is owing, and must be thankfully ascribed, as to the sovereign Will of God, *James* i. 18. as to his free rich Mercy, *Titus* iii. 5. as to the Efficacy of the Blood of Jesus, which procured the Privilege and Dignity of the New Birth for every Partaker of it, *Titus* iii. 6. so to the divine effectual working of the Spirit of God.

2. What the Spirit does in Regeneration is this. He mortifies the old Man or corrupt Nature, and breathes into the Soul a new vital Principle, a Principle of living to God; a Principle of sincere Love and willing Obedience to him; or, to express the Matter in Words plainer perhaps to some, he forms the Soul to a fixed habitual Disposedness for all Obedience, and to as fixed habitual a Dislike and Aversion to all Sin, as it is displeasing to God. Divines commonly distinguish these two Parts of Regeneration, *Mortification* and *Vivification*, which two, though inseparable and indeed coincident with each other, may be distinguished, and are really distinguished in the Scripture.

1. *Mortification*. By this is meant a subduing of the Corruption of Nature, which we derive from

meritorious, &c. can consist with these (and many other) Scriptures, *Isa.* xlv. 24. *ch.* liii. 5, 6. *Matt.* xx. 28. *Rom.* iii. 20, &c. *ch.* v. 9, 10, 16, 17, &c. *Gal.* ii. 16, 17. *ch.* iii. 13. *Ephes.* i. 7. *2 Tim.* i. 9. *Tit.* ii. 14. *ch.* iii. 5, 6. — *1 Cor.* i. 30, 31. — *1 Pet.* i. 18. *ch.* ii. 24. *Rev.* i. 5, 6. *ch.* v. 9, 10, 12. — *Colos.* i. 14.

from our old Father *Adam*; a weakening the Power of this old Man in us; a giving it a mortal Wound, so as that it can never recover it's former Power and Dominion. This is hinted in such Passages as those of the Apostle. *Our old Man is crucified with Christ. Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto Sin.* I, in regard to my corrupt Nature, *am crucified with Christ*^e. *Ye are freed from Sin*, i. e. from the Dominion of it by *Regeneration*, as well as from the damning Power of it by *Justification*. Regeneration makes a Man who was dead in Sin, and the Servant of Sin, to become dead indeed unto Sin: It habitually disposes him to put off the old Man; to crucify the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts of it; to make no Provision for the Flesh, or corrupt Nature; to carry on a continual Opposition to the most secret Actings and Workings of it. It makes a Man to loath the Corruption that he feels in himself; to hate the vain Thoughts of his own Heart; to bewail and lament the secret irregular Workings of his corrupt Heart before God. Indwelling Sin is the chief Burden of a renewed Soul. Being oppressed with a Sense of it, and affected with an ingenuous Godly Sorrow for it, he is continually ready to cry out, *O wretched Man that I am*, he looking on himself as a wretched miserable Creature, by Reason of the Remains of corrupt Nature, which cleave to him on all Occasions, and prove a continual Clog to him in the Ascents of his Soul heavenward; in all his Approaches towards God, and in all his Endeavours to do his Duty. The regenerate Man can with Sincerity say. "I
" would not sin against God, or displease him at
" all, if I could avoid it: I had rather die than
" continue offending God, or always serving him
" so

^e *Rom. vi. 6, 7. Gal. ii. 20.*

“ so meanly and imperfectly as I *now* do: The
 “ Afflictions that happen to me while passing thro’
 “ this world, are not so irksome and grievous to
 “ me as the sinful Corruptions of my own Heart:
 “ When, *Lord*, wilt thou grant me the happy
 “ final Release that my Soul longs after? It gives
 “ me a great deal of Pleasure to think, that if I
 “ can but once get through this World into a
 “ better, I shall there live an endless Life in the
 “ Presence of God, without ever once sinning
 “ against him more.” Such a Frame and Tem-
 per of Soul as this a Mortification of corrupt Na-
 ture brings a Man to. But together with *this*
 there is,

2. *Vivification.* This literally signifies, *making one alive.* Here it is put for the holy Spirit’s breathing into the Soul a new vital Principle, that inclines, disposes, and enables every one in whom it is, to live not unto himself, or for the doing of his own Pleasure, but unto God. This the *Apostle* joins with the former, and distinguishes from it, *Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.* *Rom. vi. 11. Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God.* If a Man is *dead unto Sin*, he can’t but be *alive unto God* thro’ Jesus Christ. This the *Apostle* again mentions, *Eph. ii. 1, 5. Col. ii. 13.* If we put off the old Man with his Deeds, we can’t but put on the new Man, which is created after God in Righteousness and true Holiness. Both these we are disposed and prepared for by the regenerating Work of the Spirit of God, which at once mortifies every one of the corrupt Affections and sinful Lusts that compose the Body of Sin, and quickens the Soul by an inspired Principle of Love and Obedience to God. What less than this can be meant by *God’s creating in a Man a clean Heart*, *Psal. li. 10.*
 by

by God's giving a new Heart, which he promises, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* by his creating us unto good Works, *Eph. ii. 10.* by his directing the Heart into the Love of God, *2 Thes. iii. 5.* by his inclining the Heart unto God's Testimonies, *Psal. cxix. 36.* by his writing his Law in the Hearts of Men, and putting his Fear into their inward Parts, *Jer. xxxi. 33,* and *ch. xxxii. 40.* upon each of which Scripture-Expressions, besides others that might be mentioned, we may form a distinct plain Description of the Work of *Regeneration*, or the renewing of the Holy Ghost. (1.) When the Spirit of God regenerates a Person, he *creates in him a clean Heart*; i. e. he works his Heart to an ingenuous godly Sorrow for his Sins, and an habitual Aversion to whatever is Evil in the Sight of God. (2.) *Regeneration gives a new Heart*; an Heart opposite to the old Man with his Deeds; and so prepares a Man for a new Life, a Life of Devotedness and Obedience to God. (3.) The regenerating Spirit so works upon us as to *create us unto good Works*; i. e. he forms our Souls, as to an habitual Aversion to all sinful Works, so to a fixed steady Disposedness for such Works as are pleasing and acceptable to God. He puts into our Souls an abiding habitual Concern to please God in all Things. (4.) The renewing Work of God's Spirit *inclines the Heart to God's Testimonies*; or, habitually disposes a Man not only to embrace a Form of Godliness, but to serve God in such an holy spiritual Manner as his Law requires. (5.) *Regeneration writes God's Law in the Heart*; gives him not only some Knowledge of his Duty, but works in him Inclinations, and Dispositions, answerable to the pure, strict, spiritual Commands of the Law: so that the renewed Soul can say, *To Will is present with me*; and *I delight in the Law of God*; my Heart is reconciled to the pure spiritual Obedience that it

requires, *though how to perform*, or thoroughly and perfectly do, *that which is good I find not*^f. (6.) *Regeneration directs the Heart into the Love of God*, a sincere prevailing Love to God; and *puts his Fear*, a filial Fear of God, *into the Heart*. What plainer Assertions can there be of *infused Habits*, or Principles of Grace, than *these*? Yet while some soberly and gravely oppose this Doctrine, others laugh to hear a Man talk of such infused Habits or Principles. But laughing and jesting are different things from arguing and proving. 'Tis easier strongly and boldly to deny this Doctrine, than to disprove it. IF the Spirit of God, or God working by his Spirit, is the sole Agent in the Work of *Regeneration*, on which Account 'tis called the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, and the regenerate Person is often said to be born or begotten of God; IF the Will of Man has no active Interest or Concern in his being born again, *John i. 13*. IF the People of God are made willing in the Day of his Power, *Psal. cx. iii*. IF Man was created at first *upright*^g or holy, and *Regeneration* re-enstamps the holy Image of God on the Soul; IF the new Man is created after God in Righteousness and true Holiness, and the Children of God are so wrought upon by *him* as to be *created unto good Works*; IF God expressly promises to put his Fear into the Hearts of Men, &c. IF the Corruption of Nature that the Scripture terms, *our old Man, Flesh, &c.* is not contracted by Imitation and Custom in sinning, but is a native hereditary Distemper; as is plain from *Job xiv. 4. Psal. li. 5. Eph. ii. 3.* with many

^f *Rom. vii. 18, 22.*

^g The Denial of *this* is a fundamental Mistake. It leads to a Denial of *Original Sin*, and the Doctrine of *infused Principles of Grace*, which, as an essential Part of the true Doctrine of *Regeneration*, and Salvation by free sovereign Grace, I here offer some Proofs of.

many other Scriptures; If all truly good Works are the Fruits of a good Principle wrought in the Soul, and “ Works done before the Grace of “ Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are “ not pleasant to God, but have the Nature of “ Sin,” as every Subscriber of the Articles of the Church of *England* solemnly asserts; these things being so, it plainly follows, that the Faith, Repentance, Love, Fear, &c. which distinguish the true Servants of God from others, are not of the Nature of *acquired*, but *infused Habits* or Principles. To say, with a late Author ^h, that “ *Virtue* or *Holiness* must be the Effect of a Man’s own Choice “ and Endeavour; that by the right Use and Application of his natural Powers, every Man “ may, and must, attain to an Habit of Religion “ and Holiness,” is altogether unwarranted by the Scripture. If Men are sincerely willing to take their Sentiments from thence, instead of bending the Scripture to their own preconceived unproved Maxims, the foregoing Hints, one would think, might convince them, that such is the evil Temper of Man since the Fall, that he is not duly disposed for such an Use and Application of his natural Powers, as may conduce to true Religion and his future final Happiness, till he becomes renewed by the Spirit of God. How can a Repetition and Course of Works unpleasant to God ⁱ, and

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evil

^h Mr *J. Taylor* in his Book afore-mentioned, in Opposition to which (as denying *infused Principles of Grace*, and as asserting a Power in every Man, to *regenerate* himself, or attain to an Habit of Holiness) I just hint the above-mentioned Arguments, in Proof of the sole Agency of the divine Spirit in *Regeneration*, (which implies a *Passiveness* of the Subject wrought upon) and the Doctrine of infused, or inspired Principles of Grace.

ⁱ I here suppose, Works done before Regeneration, or the Inspiration of the holy Spirit, to be unpleasant to God, and evil, &c. according to the 10th, 12th, 13th Articles of the Church of *England*. See a Proof of it in *Jer.* xxxi. 18, 19.

2 *Tim.*

evil in the Eye of the Law, produce a Principle of Love and Obedience to God; or work the Heart of a Sinner to an habitual Disposedness for living, not only soberly, and righteously towards Men, but godly in the World? — The Doctrine of *infused Habits*, or Principles, is no *scholastick Invention* as some insinuate. There are express strong Testimonies to it in the Writings of *Augustin*, and his immediate Followers, who were, I think, considerably earlier than the *Schoolmen*. And I could easily point out Traces of it in several of the *Ante-Augustinian Fathers*, if it was needful. Every Minister of the Church of *England* is either a Believer of this Doctrine^k, or he is insincere, or a meer *Ignoramus* in Matters of Divinity, not knowing what the *Church* says in it's established Articles, or what he himself says to God in his customary formal Addresses. But what I mainly and indeed solely, build upon is the *Scripture*, which in the numerous Passages above cited, and others at hand, plainly and strongly asserts this Doctrine. But to go on,

3. The renewing Influence of the Spirit of God, like that of Water, is cleansing and purifying. *Sin* is of the Nature of Filth and Corruption. It debases the Soul, pollutes the whole Man, and renders it as an unclean thing in the Sight of God; *i. e.* it indisposes a Man for the serving of God in a due Manner, and greatly unfits him for Communion

2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Tit.* iii. 5. *Prov.* xv. 8, 9. *Jer.* xxxii. 39. *Rom.* vi. 6. *cb.* viii. 7, 8, 9. 1 *Pet.* i. 2.

^k Dr *Hammond* was a Believer of it, as appears in his *Exposition of Gal.* vi. 15. lately republished, together with Bishop *Hopkins's* excellent Discourse on *John* iii. 5. with which I perfectly agree in Opposition to several Moderns, who seem to pin their Faith partly on the *Scriptures*, and partly on the *Fathers*; or as Dr *W——d* somewhere expresses it, *Scripture interpreted by Primitive and Catholic Tradition.*

munion with God and his People. When therefore the Spirit of God forms the Soul to an holy Temper and Disposition, he is said to *create a clean Heart, to purify the Heart, to sprinkle clean Water on a Man, to wash him from his Filthiness, &c.* and this cleansing Efficacy of the divine Spirit is expressed in the Text by a being *born of Water*. There is in the Text what we call an *Hendiadis*, which is when the same thing is expressed by two different Words coupled together by the exegetical Particle, *and*. To be born, or begotten, of Water and the Spirit, is not to be both *baptized and renewed*; but it is to be regenerated, or renewed, by the Soul-purifying Influence of the Spirit of God, often mentioned both in the Old and New Testament. — But there is a Difference of Opinions as to this, a being *born of Water*. Some take *Baptism* to be here alluded to. But that, I think, is uncertain. It does not appear that *Nicodemus* had submitted to *John's* Baptism. Consequently he had no Regard for *that*, or any external Washings, but the legal and traditional ones of the *Jews*; which makes it probable that *these*, rather than the Baptism of *John* and Christ, were alluded to in the Text. It was as though our Lord had said. “ You *Pharisees* are much
“ taken up with outward Washings, of divine
“ or human Appointment. The *latter* you are as
“ fond of as of the *former*, and account it a considerable Point of Religion to observe *both*.
“ But be not deceived: I whom you believe to
“ be a Teacher sent from God assure you, and
“ deliver it as a most weighty important Truth,
“ that nothing of this Kind can recommend you to
“ God. No outward Forms or Rites of Man's
“ devising, no external Observance of Forms and
“ Rites of *divine* Appointment, can be of Advantage to your Souls, or so purify your defiled
“ Natures

“ Natures (the Filth of which you are stupidly and
 “ proudly insensible of) as to render you meet
 “ for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.
 “ There is a spiritual cleansing you must partake
 “ of, an Heart-purifying Work of the Spirit of
 “ God, answerable to such Promises as those. *I*
 “ *will sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall*
 “ *be clean: from all your Filthiness, and from all*
 “ *your Idols, will I cleanse you. A new Heart also*
 “ *will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put with-*
 “ *in you; and I will take away the stony Heart out*
 “ *of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of*
 “ *Flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and*
 “ *cause you to walk in my Statutes*¹, &c.” Which
Promises of God, signify to us our Need of spiri-
 tual Cleansing, present us with a plain exact De-
 scription of the Spirit’s regenerating Work, and
 further strengthen the Doctrine of infused Habits,
 or Principles of Love and Obedience to God.
 Without some Experience of such a divine Work
 on our Souls, as corresponds to those gracious Pro-
 mises, our State is miserable *now*, and will be
 much more so *hereafter*. This our *Lord*, alluding
 to the Judaical Washings, signified to *Nicodemus*
 in the Text. By, being *born of Water and the*
Spirit, he means nothing less, nor more, than
 God’s creating in a Man a clean Heart, and put-
 ting into him a right Spirit, thereby causing him
 to walk in the Ways of God with Perseverance;
 which spiritual Cleansing the various prescribed
 Washings of the Law of *Moses* were designed to
 teach them the Necessity of, and direct them to
 seek after an Experience of. But to leave this, I
 hope,

¹ Let me entreat those who speak so highly of the Dignity
 of *Virtue*, the Merit of their own Works, the moral and spiri-
 tual Powers of human Nature ever since the Fall, to enquire
 seriously, whether the Spirit of God has done for them what
 is answerable to such Promises, and others of the same Import.

hope, not useless Digression. — Many think that *Baptism* is not only alluded to, but directly spoken of, and meant in this Part of my Text. *Except a Man be born of Water.* They insist upon it strenuously, that *to be born of Water* is *to be baptized*. Dr *Lightfoot* is much displeased with *Calvin* for contradicting this Interpretation, and understanding the Words of *spiritual Regeneration* solely. However this latter Interpretation seems much better grounded than the other. That, how many soever have been fond of it, it will be no difficult Matter to confute. This is certain that the Way of speaking used in the Text does not absolutely require it; since what we call *evδισιδις*, a putting of different Words for expressing the same thing, is frequent in all Writings. An Instance of it in *Matth. iii. 11.* has been observed by many. There the *Holy Ghost* and *Fire*, don't signify both the Influences of the Holy Ghost, and an external Application of Fire to the Subjects spoken of (as some have fancied, from thence taking Occasion to baptize with the Use of Fire as well as of Water)^m; but, *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*, is to this Purpose, he shall, or can, confer upon you the Gifts of the Spirit of God, the Influence of which resembles Fire, as it is enlightning, warming, and purifying; or, he shall vouchsafe to you, the *Spirit of burning* spoken of by the Prophetⁿ. Whereas some refer this Passage to that most extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Ghost in the Appearance of Fire, *Acts ii.* We are not, I think, obliged to restrain it to *that*.
For

^m This was very antient, since 'tis spoken of as the Practice of some Hereticks, in a Treatise of *re-baptizing Hereticks*, in *Rigaltius's* Edition of *Cyprian*. "Quia Johannes dixit baptizandos nos Spiritu & igni, eo quod addiderit—& igni, quidam desperati homines ausi sunt pravitatem suam porrigere." pag. 142.

ⁿ *Isa. iv. 4.*

For that Descent of the Holy Ghost was peculiar to a few; but the Words of *John the Baptist* seem to be of a larger Extent, and may be understood not as a Promise of what Christ *would* do, but rather as a Declaration of what he *could* do, even for the *Pharisees, Sadducees*, and other *Jews* whom *John* is there speaking to. Verbs of the future Tense, are sometimes put potentially. *He shall baptize*, i. e. he can baptize *you*, *you Jews* whom I now speak to, *ver. 7, 9.* (among whom were none of the Disciples met together on the famous Day of Pentecost.) Even *you my present Hearers* he can, (and if you become his Followers he will) baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire. As the enlightning, warming, purifying Influences of the Spirit of Grace are compared to *Fire*; so the Influences of the same Spirit, as a Sanctifier and Comforter, are set forth by *Water*, and that often both in the Old and New Testament; of which a few Instances may suffice, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.* There God's *sprinkling clean Water* upon his People, and *cleansing them from all their Filthiness*, is equivalent with his *giving them a new Heart*, and *putting within them a new Spirit*; Expressions which there is no making any tolerable Sense of, but on this Supposition, that Sinners become regenerate and new Creatures, not by the right Use and Application of their natural Powers, with such a divine Help as is common to all; but they are regenerated by the holy Spirit's putting into them new supernatural Principles of divine Love and Obedience. *Isa. xlv. 3.* "I will pour Water on
 " him that is thirsty, &c. I will pour my Spirit
 " upon thy Seed, &c." What the *Water* is that God promises to pour forth, the latter Clause tells us. It is not the Water of *Baptism* (which some of the Antients supposed to be prophetically pointed
 at

at *here*, and in *Chap. i. 16°*, and *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.*) It is not the *Water* made use of for the legal Purifications, but it is the *Water of the Spirit*, or the cleansing Efficacy of the Spirit of Christ. So in *John iv. 10.* the Spirit of Grace is signified by *living Water*; and *ver. 14.* the quickning Principle that the Spirit of God inspires into the Soul, is called a *Well of Water in a Man, springing up into everlasting Life.* *Eph. v. 26.* *Christ gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify it, every Member of it, and, or, cleanse it as with the washing of Water, by the Word:* To which Purpose we may fairly interpret that controverted Text, *Tit. ii. 5, 6.* — *According to his Mercy he saved us by the washing, some render it, bathe, or laver, of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which, Holy Ghost, he shed, or poured out, on us abundantly;* where (1.) The Word, *Regeneration*, does not denote *Baptism*, as some ignorantly pretend. (2.) If *Baptism* is at all there spoken of, 'tis meant not by the Word *Regeneration*, with which the renewing of the Holy Ghost is plainly equivalent, but by the entire Phrase, *washing of Regeneration*, from which Phrase, if intended to express *Baptism*, all that can be gathered is, that the *Baptism* instituted by Christ, is an external Sign and Symbol of spiritual Regeneration, or the renewing of the Spirit of God; consequently 'tis not *Regeneration* itself,

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° Even *Justin Martyr* seems to apply this Text to *Baptism*; for having given the Name of *Regeneration* to *Baptism*, and, in Support of that Way of speaking, quoted *John iii. 3*, he then brings in this Text of *Isaiah*, and some others, to show, that true Penitents were, in Gospel-Times, to obtain Remission by *Water*. He adds, that this Laver is called *Illumination*; referring, I suppose, to *Heb. vi. 4.* (which, by the Way, proves he knew and received as Canonical, the Epistle to the *Hebrews*) and that the *Dæmons* having heard this *washing* published by the Prophet, took Occasion from thence to introduce certain Washings and Purifications among their blind Votaries, *pag. 94, 95°.*

itself, or any essential Part of it, as it must needs be if spoken of in my Text; where a being *born of Water and the Spirit*, plainly answers to the being *born again* aforementioned. But, (3.) probably *Baptism* as an appointed Sign of *Regeneration*, or spiritual Renovation, is but alluded to, where the Apostle mentions, as essentially belonging to our Salvation, *the washing of Regeneration*. Baptism being by God's Appointment an outward Sign of the Blessing of *Regeneration*, in Allusion thereto, as such, the Apostle ascribes *washing* or cleansing to *Regeneration* itself. *Washing of Regeneration* is the same Way of speaking, as when we say, the Grace of Repentance, the Blessing of Forgiveness, &c. *Regeneration*, or Renovation, seems to be the *washing* itself spoken of, and *this* being denominated from the Holy Ghost as the Author of it, the Apostle adds, *which, &c. i. e.* which Holy Ghost in regard to his washing, or Soul-purifying Influence, *be shed on us, &c.* Since now the Spirit is so oft compared to *Water*, and his *renewing* the Souls of Men, is expressed by his *washing* them, making them clean, &c. what need is there to understand the Text of the Baptismal Water, which probably was not chiefly, if at all, alluded to? Why must we not understand it rather of the *Water of the Spirit*, the Water that God has promised to pour forth, and that he *does* shed in Regeneration? Especially will this Interpretation appear just, if it be added, that in Case the Text speaks of *Baptism*, this external Appointment will be as absolutely and indispensably necessary, as the *renewing of the Spirit* itself. But will any serious thinking Person dare to assert this? None of the pious *Antients* ^p ever asserted, or can be reasonably supposed

^p Several of them, as *Cyprian*, *Chrysostom*, &c. strongly express sometimes the absolute Necessity of the outward Baptism, with

supposed to have really and deliberately intended thus much. 'Tis not a bare Want, but a willful Neglect and Contempt of the Sacraments, as divine Ordinances, that is damning; as *Augustin*⁹, in his later Writings against the *Donatists*, and from him *Bernard* with the Schoolmen expressly assert. But if the Text must be interpreted of the Baptismal Water, more will follow from such an Interpretation than many Asserters of it design to gather from hence; namely, the equal, absolute, indispensable Necessity of the outward *Baptism* and *spiritual Renovation*. For our Lord does not here say, A being born of Water will not do without a being born of, or begotten by, the Spirit; or, Except a Man be born of Water when Water can be had, but whatever a being *born of Water* means, if 'tis distinct from the other, 'tis evidently insisted on as equally requisite, *Except a Man be born of*
C 2 *Water*

with spiritual Renovation: But since several were allowed to put off their *Baptism* to a little before their Death; and some of the Fathers expressly place *Valentinian*, the orthodox Emperor, in Heaven, tho' he happened to die *unbaptized*; and they allow *Martyrdom*, or a Desire of Baptism, without an Opportunity of receiving it, in some Cases to supply the Want of the outward Ordinance; this makes it plain that they did not look on the outward Baptism, as equally necessary with spiritual Regeneration; and what they sometimes speak that Way, really means no more than that, in their Opinion, God did not ordinarily suffer those whom he intended to save, to leave the World unbaptized; and *Baptism* was to be embraced as an appointed Seal of Remission to Infants, and such grown Persons as were sincere Believers.

⁹ "Invenio non tantum passionem pro nomine Christi id quod ex Baptismo deerat posse supplere, sed etiam fidem Conversionemque cordis, si forte ad celebrandum mysterium Baptismi in angustiis temporum succurri non potest." *De Bapt. cont. Donat. l. 4. cb. 22.* Where he instances in the penitent *Thief*, who was saved without Baptism, in *Cornelius*, and others, on whom the Holy Ghost fell antecedently to their being baptized, to prove that *Faith* and a *Conversion of the Heart*, may be sufficient without the external *Baptism*.

Water and the Spirit ^r *he cannot, &c.* This then I now proceed to,

II. The *Necessity* of the New Birth; here described by a being *born of Water and the Spirit*. Except a Man, &c. the Proposition is universal, and asserts the indispensable Necessity of the spiritual Renovation of every one of Mankind. Let a Man be what he will in Regard to natural Endowments, acquired Abilities, external Church Privileges, or high Conceits of himself, and Esteem with others; without such a renewing Work as has been imperfectly described, he is lost for ever. Here I might show, What is meant by *the Kingdom of God*, and how many distinct Truths are comprehended in the solemn earnest Affirmation of the Text. — By the *Kingdom of God* some understand the visible Church, as it was to subsist in Gospel-Times, or the Gospel-State of the Church, together with the Kingdom of Glory; and they would make out from the Text thus much, that *Baptism* is requisite to Church-Membership, and *spiritual Regeneration* to future Blessedness. This Exposition is no Way unsafe: The Matter of it is true, but more as I apprehend than the Truth of the Text; the first Clause of which relates solely to *spiritual Renovation*, and the next Words to what Divines call the *Kingdom of Grace*, or the *Kingdom of Glory*. When in the Gospels, we read to this Purpose, “the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand,” or “the Kingdom of God draweth nigh;” there the *Kingdom* spoken of is the *Gospel Church*, or the Evangelical Church-State that the Ministry of *John* and *Christ* were to usher in. But in the Text, with some other Places, such a Construction of the Phrase, *Kingdom of God*, can hardly

^r The Antients generally, many of them at least, quote the Words thus, *Except a Man be born again of Water, &c.*

hardly be admitted, unless we interpret the Words before us to this Sense ; Except a Man be renewed by the Spirit, he has no Right, or Claim, to the special Ordinances of the Church : He is not fit to be a Member of any particular Gospel-Church : The manifestly Unregenerate are no Way qualified for Communion with God's People in all Gospel-Ordinances. This is a Truth deducible from many Texts. The primitive Churches were made up of visible Saints. The Members of them were such as could, and did, walk together in the Fear of the Lord ^f. The Apostle wrote to the Churches of *Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, &c.* as being each of them a Company of Saints. The Generality of them were truly such, and so would be the major Part of Church-Members, in every Age and Place, was not the instituted Discipline of Christ disregarded and forgotten by most. But though *Regeneration* is a requisite Qualification for complete Church-Membership, and nothing less than some promising Appearances of it can warrant the Admission of any, to a partaking of all Church-Privileges ; I would not chuse to argue this from the Text, which may rather be understood of what we call the *Kingdom of Grace* and the *Kingdom of Glory*, so as to contain in it, and teach us, the following Truths.

1. While *unregenerate* we are not, cannot be, the loyal, faithful Subjects of Christ [†] ; but we belong to the Kingdom of Satan, till renewing Grace delivers us from that Power of Darkness, and translates us into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (that Kingdom of his which consists of a People made willing in the Day of his Power), *Col. i. 13.*

2. If

^f *Acts ix. 31.*

[†] " Nisi quis nascitur ex aqua & Spiritu, non ibit in regnum DEI, i. e. non erit sanctus." *Tertul. de Animâ.*

2. If we are not *regenerate*, we have no good Reason to believe that our Sins are pardoned; neither have we any present pleadable Interest in the special saving Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, such as a *Title to Heaven*, a *good Hope through Grace*, &c.

3. If we are not *born from above*, we are liable to an endless Separation from the comforting Presence of the ever-blessed God, and must be for ever shut out from the Enjoyments, Society, and Business of the heavenly World; which the renewing Operations of the divine Spirit are indeed absolutely necessary to meeten and qualify us for. What should an unregenerate Sinner do in Heaven? With what Complacency could he always abide there? The Business, the Company, the Enjoyments of that World, would be no way agreeable and entertaining to such an one. For *they who are after the Flesh*, or unrenewed, *do mind the things of the Flesh*^u; They relish, are pleased with, taste a Sweetness in, such good Things as the present World affordeth; but the spiritually minded, disrelish the Pleasures of Sin, and prefer those of Religion and Communion with God; They follow after Righteousness; moderate their Love to every thing of this World; hunger and thirst after Christ; and these only can deliberately choose such a State of sinless Purity, and such an endless Life of holy, and blessed, Communion with God and his Saints, as *Heaven* is to be. It could not therefore comport with the *Justice*, or *Holiness*, or *Wisdom* of God, to admit the unregenerate into his heavenly Kingdom; the Privileges and Exercises of which ought to be inseparable; and none are in a due Preparedness for *either*, but such as are renewed by the Spirit of God. From

whence

^u Rom. viii. 5, 6.

whence this is, will further appear when we have spoken to the

III^d General Head. Our Lord having asserted the absolute indispensable Necessity of spiritual Renovation, *ver. 5.* he adds, (to account for the true Ground of such a Necessity) *That which is born, or begotten, of the Flesh is Flesh; and that which is born, or begotten, of the Spirit is Spirit.* Where observe,

1. Our Lord opposes *Flesh* and *Spirit* to each other, which Opposition we often meet with; so that whatever is meant by *these two*, they denote things opposite.

2. Our Lord speaks here of a twofold Birth. The Term *Regeneration* implies as much; and in the Text the two Births are distinctly mentioned.

3. The former of these two Births is spoken of as not only prior to the other, but as what renders the *other* absolutely necessary. Because *that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh*, or carnal, therefore we must be *born of the Spirit*, and so made *spiritual*, or fit suitable Subjects for possessing the Privileges of the Kingdom of God aforementioned.

4. If the *latter* of these two Births is consequent on, and made necessary by, the *former*; it follows that a being born *Flesh* is a being born corrupt and sinful, a coming into the World fallen degenerate Creatures. For as a Necessity of *cleansing* evidently supposes *Filth*, so the Necessity of being inwardly renewed by the Spirit of God, no less presupposes *Degeneracy*, and *sinful Corruption*. 'Tis granted that the Use made of this Term *Flesh* is various and manifold. Having taken some Pains to trace out the several Significations of it, it appears that it is put, (1.) For the entire Animal Body, *Psal. lxi. 1. Psal. xvi. 9.* (2.) For the whole Man, *Neb. v. 5. Eccles. v. 6. Joh. i. 14.* (3.) For

(3.) For what is frail and mortal as such, *Isa. xxxi. 3. 2 Cor. x. 3.* (4.) For living Creatures of all Kinds, *Gen. vi. 13, 17, 19. Numb. xvi. 22. ch. xxvii. 16.* — (5.) For Mankind in general, *Deut. v. 26. Isa. xl. 5. ch. xlix. 26.* (6.) For Creatures of every Kind, as distinguished from the great God himself, that most pure perfect Spirit, *Job. xvii. 2.* (7.) For Mankind as *frail* and *impotent*, *Jer. xvii. 5.* — (8.) For Man as *corrupt*; or the corrupt Principle in Man, often opposed to the Spirit of God, or the Principle of Grace inwrought by him. In this Sense we read of *Lusts of the Flesh*, *Eph. ii. 3. Gal. v. 16, 24.* and *Works of the Flesh*, *Gal. v. 19.* This last Sense of the Word is obvious, when we are required to make no Provision for the *Flesh*, *Rom. xiii. 14.* when we are forbidden to live after the *Flesh*, *Rom. viii. 12, 13.* when true Christians are described as walking not after the *Flesh*, but after the *Spirit*, *Rom. viii. 1.* and wherever, *the Flesh*, stands opposed to the sanctifying Spirit, or the inwrought Principle of holy Obedience; which taking it's Name from it's great Author, is called *Spirit*. This then is the plain, undeniable Meaning of the Text. *That which is born*, or begotten, of a corrupt degenerate Parent, is like it's Parent corrupt and degenerate; and *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*. What can be meant by *Flesh*, as in the former Part of the Text opposed to the divine Spirit, and his gracious Work on the Soul, but a corrupt sinful Nature propagated, from one to another of the Posterity of *Adam* by natural Generation? Whatever, or whoever, is born of Mankind since the Fall, it is denominated *Flesh*; and that *Flesh* is here put not for *sinless Frailty*, but *sinful Corruption*, we gather from hence, that it is opposed to the Spirit of Grace. Mankind since the Fall are indeed by Nature frail and mortal; but was not
Christ

Christ himself born in such a State no less than the rest of *Adam's* Posterity? Yet our Lord, *though Flesh* in that Sense, had no need of the renewing Operations of the Spirit. He was born, though mortal or liable to Death, perfectly sinless or holy. The renewing of the Holy Ghost is indeed made necessary, not by any kind of sinless Infirmities, which it must be granted are sometimes meant by *Flesh*, but by that sinful Corruption of Nature which we derive originally from *Adam*: *This* is often called *Flesh*: This alone is opposite to the Spirit of Grace: This, I confidently aver, must be the Sense of the Word, whenever we find it opposed to the sanctifying renewing Spirit as such: Thus therefore we are bound to understand it in the Text. — Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles? Can a corrupt poisoned Spring send forth pure wholesome Streams? Is a Lamb ever born of a Lion? Who then can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one. Our Lord indeed was born of a Parent defiled with Sin, and yet was perfectly undefiled in himself: But then his Birth was absolutely supernatural: *That which is born of the Flesh*, in a natural and ordinary Way, must be *Flesh*; as, on the other hand, *that which is born of the Spirit* of God must be *Spirit*, i. e. spiritual.

This Text has been often quoted in Proof of the original Corruption of Mankind since the Fall: And 'tis as express to that Purpose as Words can well be. If you would know how the former Part of this sixth Verse is interpreted, or rather perverted, to make it consist with a Denial of *Original Sin*, I will tell you from a Writer^w among ourselves, who, after several other resolved Deniers of the Doctrine of Original Sin, pretends, that *to*

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^w Mr *John Taylor* of *Norwich*; see pag. 144. of his late Book of *Original Sin*.

be born of the Flesh, is to be born of a Woman by natural Descent and Propagation; and *to be Flesh of Flesh*, according to him, is to be a Man consisting of Body and Soul, or the mere Constitution and Powers of a Man in their natural State. But does not this look like an offering Violence to a plain Text, and shutting one's Eyes against clear Scripture-Light? The Question is, Whether *Flesh* is not opposed to *Spirit* in this Verse, as well as often elsewhere? Whether it is not the sanctifying renewing Spirit that is spoken of, in the latter Clause of the Verse, together with the good Principle in every regenerate Person, that from the Spirit it's Author is denominated *Spirit*, or denominates the Subject of it *spiritual*? Whether any Thing but sinful Corruption, or what is sinfully corrupt, is in the Nature of it, as such, opposite to the Spirit of God? If these Things be so, and this 6th Verse was brought in for a Proof of the absolute Necessity of a being born of the Spirit, or renewed by the Spirit of God; and if wherever *Flesh* is opposed to the *Spirit of Grace*, as it is in several other Texts besides this, it always implies sinful Corruption in it; if so, it seems abundantly evident, that *to be born Flesh of Flesh*, is to be the corrupt degenerate Offspring of corrupt degenerate Parents, so as to have need of the renewing Influences of the Spirit of God, on that Account, even from our Infancy and Birth. Let me have leave to make this Proposal. If the *Gentlemen* who oppose the Doctrine of *Original Sin* can prove, either that the *Spirit of God*, as a Sanctifier, is not spoken of in the latter Clause of this Verse; or that the *Flesh* spoken of in the former is not opposed to the sanctifying Spirit of God; or that the Nature of Man is opposite thereto, any otherwise than as sinful and corrupt; let them give us a Specimen of their Abilities in this Respect: But if nothing of
all

all this is proveable by any of them, let them fairly yield to Scripture-Evidence, practise for once the *Sincerity* they so loudly profess, and join with *us* in acknowledging the Truth of *original Corruption*, as plainly attested in, and by, these Words of Christ, *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh; and, &c.* — for certainly discovering the true Sense of which Text, please to compare it with the following Passages of Scripture. *Rom. viii. 1.* “There is no Condemnation to them — who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.” *Ver. 5.* “They who are after the Flesh do mind the Things of the Flesh; but they who are after the Spirit, the Things of the Spirit.” *Ver. 6.* “To be carnally minded is Death; but to be spiritually minded, &c.” *Ver. 8, 9.* “They who are in the Flesh cannot please God: But ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit.” *Ver. 13.* “If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body,” (where he means not the *natural Body*, as such, but the *Body of Sin* spoken of *Rom. vi. 6.* and the *Body of Death*, *ch. vii. 24.*) *Gal. v. 16, 17.* “Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the Lust of the Flesh. For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, — and these are contrary the one to the other.” *Ver. 19, 22.* “The Works of the Flesh are manifest — But the Fruit of the Spirit,” — *Ver. 24, 25.* “They who are Christ’s have crucified the Flesh.—If we live in the Spirit, &c.” In all which Scriptures, the *Flesh* and the *Spirit* are put in the same Opposition to each other, as the *old Man* and the *new Man*, *Eph. iv. 22, 24.* Now with the Help of such Passages as these, we easily discern the true Meaning of the Text. If *to walk*, or live, *after the Flesh*, as it is opposed to a *walking*, or living, *after the Spirit*, is to live agreeably to the sinful

Inclinations of corrupt Nature, instead of hearkning to the Dictates of the Spirit of God, and the good Dispositions of the new Creature: *If to be in the Flesh*, as it stands opposed to a *being in the Spirit*, is, to be in an unregenerate State, or under the Power of Sin, the Dominion of corrupt Nature, instead of having this old Man crucified with Christ: If the *Flesh* and the *Spirit* are two contrary Principles, which counter-act each other in every truly good Person, (he being while in this World renewed but imperfectly) and hinder even the *best* from doing what they would do: If the *Works of the Flesh*, and the *Lusts of the Flesh*, are opposed to the *Spirit*, the Fruits of the *Spirit*: If so, why must *to be born of the Flesh* signify no more than *to be born of a Woman as such*, and to be *Flesh*, no more than to be a Man consisting of a Soul and a Body? If *Adam* had not sinned, and had transmitted original Righteousness, (which I have elsewhere given a Proof of) to his Descendants; in that Case, every one of the Descendants of *Adam* would have been born of a Woman by natural Descent and Propagation, and would have been a *Man*, &c. but without having any Necessity of a being born of the *Spirit*, or renewed by the Holy Ghost. Since then the Design of this Sixth Verse was to confirm the Necessity of a spiritual Renovation, and a *being born of the Flesh* is opposed to a *being born of the Spirit*, and a *being born Flesh* is opposed to a *being born Spirit*; Our Lord seems here plainly to teach the common Doctrine of Original Sin, how unwilling soever some are to receive, and seriously apply to themselves, this plain Scripture-Truth. — Since then *corrupt Nature* is called *Flesh*, and to be born *Flesh*, is to come into the World Sinners. I would briefly show,

First,

First, What that Corruption of Nature is which the Scripture terms *Flesh*? And,

Secondly, Why is it called by this Name?

First, What is that Corruption of Nature which the Scripture terms *Flesh*, both in the Text and many other Places? There are two Branches of it. A want of original Righteousness, and a natural Propensity to Sin.

1. There is a *want of original Righteousness*. God made Man upright, or righteous, in the Beginning. Principles of Reason and Holiness were connatural to the Soul of Man at first. He was inspired as with a Principle of Self-Love, so with a Principle of Love and Obedience to his kind Maker. But when Man, being deceived, presumed to transgress, he instantly became an ungodly Person: he lost his original Rectitude; and in this State every one of Mankind is now born. Whereas many are Strangers to a Principle of divine Love, the Question may be, How long have they been without it? To which I reply, Ever since they were born, and first became the Offspring of *Adam*, on Account of whose original Transgression, we, with his other Descendants, are born, and created, without original Righteousness.

2. With this Want of the original Righteousness of Man there is, in corrupt Nature, a *natural Propensity to Sin*. This is inseparable from the other. If Man is born, and grows up in the World, without original Righteousness, he is born and grows up propense to Sin; which includes these two Things, an Aversion to what is Good, and an Inclination to what is Evil, in the Sight of God. (1.) We are naturally averse to what is Good in the Eye of the Law of God. *In me*, said the

the Apostle, *that is, in my Flesh, there dwelleth no good Thing*^x. Corrupt Nature is an Enemy to the holy spiritual Law of God. “For the carnal Mind is Enmity against him^y.” It does not, it will not, it cannot, while unrenewed, submit to his holy, just, and good Law; so that “they who are in the Flesh cannot please God.” For want of that Principle of divine Love, which was rooted in the human Nature at first, and lost by the Fall, they are indisposed for such an Obedience as the Law requires, and as the natural Relations between God and his Creature Man indispensably oblige to: They labour under a moral and spiritual Inability to chuse and do the things that please God. The Tractableness of Disposition discoverable in some Children more than in others; the moral Virtues of the *Heathen*; the Amiability of Temper and Behaviour, in several Instances, that some attain to, and may be noted for, though Strangers to the renewing Grace of God, are no Proofs of the contrary to what I have asserted; since such Virtues, Tractableness, Amiability of Conversation, may evidently consist with a Want of that sincere prevailing Love to God, which habitually disposes the Subject of it, to mourn for his Sins as displeasing God; to observe, loath, and bewail the secret corrupt Workings of his Mind and Heart; to hunger and thirst after a nearer Conformity to Christ, and a compleater, a perfect sinless, Obedience to the divine Will. (2.) As we are naturally averse to what is good, so prone and inclinable to what is evil in the Sight of God. *Psal lvi. 2. The wicked are estranged from the Womb, they go astray as soon as they are born speaking lyes.* Is not this verified in young Children, who are ready of themselves to run into evil Ways,

^x Rom. vii. 18.^y Rom. viii. 7.

Ways, but are with Difficulty brought to learn and practise what is good ; who do not sooner appear *rational* than a corrupt evil Disposition begins to exert and discover itself ; who as soon as they can speak at all are ready and forward to speak Lyes ? The same corrupt sinful Disposition, as found and discovering itself in every one of Mankind, from his earliest Childhood, and thereby proving the original universal Corruption of human Nature since the Fall, is witnessed to in *Gen. viii. 21. Psal. xiv. 3. Prov. xxii. 15.* Which with many other Scriptures, might be explained and vindicated as fully expressing the Doctrine of original Corruption : And this, I will do, when a fit Opportunity presents, if God permits. — Now does not *this* confirm the absolute Necessity of *Regeneration*, which re-instamps the Image of God on the Soul, restores it to it's primitive Purity in some Measure, and inspires a Man with such a sacred Principle as forms him averse to what is evil, and inclinable to what is good, in the Sight of God ? Is not such a Change as needful for *us* as it was for *Nicodemus*, or as it is for any others ? Is it not what you Parents should desire an Experience of in yourselves, and what you should earnestly request for your young tender Offspring ? — Unto you, and me, and all others who hear and read the Word, it says, *Ye must be born again.* A partial Reformation will not do : A being baptized and brought up under the Gospel, will not serve our Turn : A being Church-Members, and statedly partaking of all Ordinances, will not suffice : A being endued with preaching and praying Gifts, will save none, without such a renewing of our Souls, as has been described, and, as *corrupt Nature* is in the Text opposed to under the Character of *Flesh*. Let us enquire therefore,

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Ways, but are with Difficulty brought to learn and practise what is good ; who do not sooner appear *rational* than a corrupt evil Disposition begins to exert and discover itself ; who as soon as they can speak at all are ready and forward to speak Lyes ? The same corrupt sinful Disposition, as found and discovering itself in every one of Mankind, from his earliest Childhood, and thereby proving the original universal Corruption of human Nature since the Fall, is witnessed to in *Gen. viii. 21. Psal. xiv. 3. Prov. xxii. 15.* Which with many other Scriptures, might be explained and vindicated as fully expressing the Doctrine of original Corruption : And this, I will do, when a fit Opportunity presents, if God permits. — Now does not *this* confirm the absolute Necessity of *Regeneration*, which re-instamps the Image of God on the Soul, restores it to it's primitive Purity in some Measure, and inspires a Man with such a sacred Principle as forms him averse to what is evil, and inclinable to what is good, in the Sight of God ? Is not such a Change as needful for *us* as it was for *Nicodemus*, or as it is for any others ? Is it not what you Parents should desire an Experience of in yourselves, and what you should earnestly request for your young tender Offspring ? — Unto you, and me, and all others who hear and read the Word, it says, *Ye must be born again.* A partial Reformation will not do : A being baptized and brought up under the Gospel, will not serve our Turn : A being Church-Members, and statedly partaking of all Ordinances, will not suffice : A being endued with preaching and praying Gifts, will save none, without such a renewing of our Souls, as has been described, and, as *corrupt Nature* is in the Text opposed to under the Character of *Flesh*. Let us enquire therefore,

Secondly,

Secondly, Why is corrupt Nature called by this Name? I answer Negatively, not because it confines itself to the *Body*. For 'tis a Corruption of our whole Nature, and is therefore called *our old Man*². *Again*, This Name is not given to *corrupt Nature*, as though it consisted merely in a Repugnance of the sensual Appetite to Reason. Such a Conflict between *Reason* and *Appetite*, some say, was not wanting to innocent Man. God therefore superadded to the essential Powers of human Nature a Principle of Righteousness, or Holiness, for curbing the unruly sensitive Appetites, and enabling Man the more easily to hold them in a full Subjection to the Dictates of Reason. But though we grant that *Sense* and *Appetite* are not duly subordinate to *Reason* in *Man fallen*; we firmly believe they were so in *Man innocent*, and we earnestly protest against placing the Corruption of human Nature wholly, or principally, in this, the Rebellion of our sensual Appetites against Reason. — *Again*, Corrupt Nature is called *Flesh*, not because it is properly, or primarily, seated in the Body. For as the Body without the Spirit is dead, so without the Soul it cannot Sin. Original Righteousness *was*, and original Corruption *is*, seated primarily in the *Soul*. If Sin or corrupt Nature reigns in our mortal Bodies, and the Members of *these* are Instruments of unrighteousness, it is because our mortal Bodies being united with sinful depraved Souls, the sinful Propensities of our Souls discover themselves, and are executed, by the Members of the Body. The *Soul* as averse to what is Good and propense to what is Evil, engages it's Body in many acts of Sin, and hinders it from acting as it should do in the Service of God. But some here will object.

Obj.

² Rom. vi. 6. Ephes. iv. 22.

Obj. If the Corruption of Nature which our Text calls *Flesh*, is not confined to the *Body*, but is primarily and properly seated in the *Soul*, how comes the Soul to be corrupt? Is it made so by Creation? Or does it become so by it's Union with the *Body*? Or is it propagated and derived, as the *Body* is, and by that means corrupted.

R. 1. It is not corrupted by being *created*: For God's act of Creating could not corrupt the Soul without his being the Author of that sinful Corruption; which it would be horrid detestable Blasphemy to impute to the most Holy One.

2. The Souls of Men are not corrupted by their being united with the Bodies that the God of Nature forms for them. For how can a Mass of Matter so operate on a rational immortal Spirit, as to render it sinfully disposed, or disaffected to it's Duty? The *Soul* may defile the *Body*, but how the *Body* can communicate sinful Infection to the immortal rational Soul, I cannot perceive.

3. The Soul is not corrupted by being derived from Parent to Child as the *Body* is. For all human Souls are immediately from God the Father of Spirits. This has been well argued by many from *Heb. xii. 9.* and other Scriptures. As the Souls of our first Parents and *Christ* were immediately from God, so are all other Souls, or Spirits; for which Reason God is described as the Father of Spirits in Distinction from the Fathers of our *Flesh*, or *Bodies*. *These* are from God in a *mediate Way*, and become Servants of Sin, by means of their Relation to, and concern with, sinful degenerate Souls: But how the Souls of Men should be *by Nature corrupt and Guilty*, when they are immediately from God, and neither his Act of creating them nor their being united with Bodies can taint and defile them, this is the Difficulty we are now concerned with. To solve which I add

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4. When

4. When God creates an human Soul, though he does not, could not consistently with his moral Perfections, infuse a Principle of Sin, or Unrighteousness, into it, or implant any thing distinct from the essential Powers and Faculties of an immortal rational Spirit; yet creating it as a Soul belonging to *Adam*, and concerned with him, as the common federal Head of Mankind, he acts the Part of a righteous Judge in depriving it of, or forming it without, it's original Righteousness, the natural want of which occasions it's being not only liable but prone and inclinable to Sin, which in it's original State it was not. That God the Creator infuses a Principle of Corruption, or a Propensity towards sinful Acts into the Souls of the Posterity of *Adam*, this is a Sentiment we abhor, though some^a through Ignorance or Wilfulness have loaded our Doctrine with this black Charge. The Scripture teaches us how to account for the original Corruption of human Nature, since the Fall, as consistent with all the divine Perfections, without so vile and ungodly a Supposition as *that*.

The Truth lies in these five or six Particulars.

I. Man

^a Mr *T.* insinuates this more than once; tho' none of the Asserters of *Original Sin*, that we know of, ever intended or expressed any thing like it. Whether Mr *T.*'s Insinuations as to this, were wilful malicious Misrepresentations of our Doctrine, or proceeded from a pure Ignorance of the Doctrine he was resolved to write against, God and his own Conscience best know: We are willing to hope the *latter*; but think, *Sincerity* and *Ingenuity* should oblige Gentlemen, Scholars, Christians, first thoroughly to understand, and then fairly to represent every Doctrine, which they think fit publicly to oppose; especially if it is a Doctrine that has been generally received in the Churches of Christ, and that almost all serious sincere Christians esteem as an essential Article of the Christian Faith. Most of that Character, I suppose, consent to that old Remark of *Augustin*, "In duorum hominum causâ propriè fides Christiana consistit." The Christian Faith consists chiefly of what concerns *Adam* and Christ.

1. Man was made by God originally righteous ; which to deny, is to contradict express Scriptures ^b, and to derogate not a little from the moral Perfections of God.

2. God ordained *Adam* to be a federal Head, and treated with him not only for himself, but for all his natural Descendants. This, with the foregoing, I have proved already ^c, and therefore here take it for granted.

3. In Consequence of *that*, as, in Case of *Adam's* standing, original Righteousness would have descended from him to his remotest Posterity ; so when *Adam* sinned all Mankind sinned in him : *i. e.* he fell as their federal covenanting Representative.

4. From thence it is, that we no sooner become the Offspring of *Adam*, than that first Sin of *his* is in some sort imputed to *us* : *i. e.* 'Tis justly reputed the Sin of our federal Head ; and we for *it* are justly liable to the Death originally threatned, which I have proved elsewhere ^d to be threefold, *corporal, spiritual, eternal*. Tho' God is far from infusing Principles of Sin into the Souls of Men, when he puts them into Being by an immediate Act of creating Power, yet he imputes Guilt to them, as belonging to *Adam*, in the Instant of

E 2

their

^b Eccles. vii. 29. Gen. i. 26, 31. Eph. iv. 24.

^c In Two Sermons from Eccles. vii. 29. and Gen. ii. 16, 17. with this Title prefixed: *Man's Original Righteousness, and God's Covenant with Adam as a publick Person, asserted and proved, as the Basis of the true Doctrine of Original Sin.*

^d In the latter of the Two Sermons above-mentioned, pag. 27, 28, 29, 48. To which is added an *Appendix*, reducing Mr T's Sentiments on *Original Righteousness*, and *Original Sin*, to certain Heads, and showing how each may be confuted upon the Principles established in the foregoing Sermons. If Mr T. can disprove Man's original Righteousness and God's Covenant with *Adam* as a publick Person, let him do it. If he can't do that, he is bound in Honour and Conscience to give up his whole Scheme.

their Creation. No sooner are the *Soul* and *Body* united than the original Covenant, as transgressed by their federal Head, arrests them. This, as a plain undeniable Consequence from the foregoing Propositions already proved, I am at Liberty, to take for granted.

5. If the Souls of Mankind, though immediately from God, come into Being, by Virtue of the original Covenant, in a State of Relation to, and Concern with, their sinning federal Head; if likewise, Soul and Body are no sooner united than a Degree of Guilt is imputed to them; if so, they do and must come into the World both guilty and unholy; *guilty*, or under the Weight of the original Threatning, and *unholy*, i. e. destitute of original Righteousness, which *Adam* sinning as a publick Person, lost for *himself*, and all his natural Descendants. — That the Posterity of *Adam* are created, and born, without *original Righteousness* must be granted. The Question then is, To what is this owing? Why does the holy God send us into the World, without such a Principle of Love and Obedience as was planted in the human Nature at first? Our being born in this unhappy Condition, supposing Man to have been originally righteous or holy, is not to be accounted for, but by considering it as the penal Consequent of our being concerned in some Transgression prior to our actual Existence, (the first Sin of our first Father) on Account of which, as it was the Sin of our federal Head, we come into the World under Guilt, and destitute of original Righteousness.

6. Being thus born guilty and unholy, we are of ourselves prone and inclinable to actual Sins. Such a Being as Man if not made righteous, will, of himself, incline to Sin. A rational Being must be one of *these two*; a willing faithful Servant of God, or a Rebel against him; as I have proved elsewhere.

where. Either *Man* is inclinable to what is truly good, and averse to what is evil, in the Sight of God, or he is the *reverse*, inclinable to what is evil, and averse to what is good; *i. e.* in other Words he is either *righteous* or a *Sinner*. The *former* he is not, *naturally*, as a Descendant of *Adam*, (that all grant) consequently he comes into the World without original Righteousness; and being put into Being without *that*, but not without the essential Powers and Faculties of human Nature, he of himself, without any Principles of Sin infused into his Soul, will sin, and continue sinning as he is able. Let any one of Mankind be sent into the World, and suffered to grow up without a Principle of Righteousness wrought into his natural Powers, and he will unavoidably sin. But is the 'most Holy One chargeable on that Account? No. All that God does is this. Having appointed *Adam* a common Trustee (which I have proved to be a wise, good, just Constitution), and *Adam* having lost original Righteousness, with his primitive Title to God's Favour, for himself and all *his*, they are thereupon deprived of it, sent into the World, and suffered to grow up without it; in which Case Man retaining the essential Powers of human Nature, will sin. But I must not enlarge on this at present. I only now give an Hint of the several Truths that have been in Part confirmed before*, and that may be further insisted on and more fully proved if it be needful. — But to return to the Text, as to which some will be ready to say. All that it teaches us is this, that
“ each of Mankind, being descended of frail mortal Parents, is like *them* frail and mortal.
“ When *Adam* sinned he became liable to Death,
“ and entailed Mortality on his Descendants; each
of

* In the two printed Sermons aforementioned.

“ of whom, in Consequence of the Fall, is born
 “ liable to die; and so it may be said. *That*
 “ *which is born of the Flesh is Flesh.*” To this
 I reply,

1. If the Meaning of this is, that each of the
 Posterity of *Adam* is born under a Sentence of
 Death, on Account of *his Fall*, as the proper im-
 mediate Cause of it, it would follow, that the
 Fall of *Adam*, or his first Transgression, is in some
 Sense imputed to *us* and the rest of his Posterity :
 But this is not what some intend, who speak of
 Mankind being born *mortal* in Consequence of the
 Fall of their first Father. The whole of what they
 intend is, that *Adam's* Fall was the Occasion of
 their being, by the Will and Providence of God,
 subjected to temporal Sorrows and Death^f. This
 is all that some would infer from those Passages.
 “ In *Adam* all die.” “ By one Man's Disobe-
 “ dience many were made Sinners : By the Offence
 “ of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Con-
 “ demnation :” But can these Texts be fairly in-
 terpreted to so low a Sense? Certainly they can-
 not, as has been proved by several^g.

2. Though it is true that the Descendants of
Adam are born under a Sentence of Death, in Con-
 sequence of his Transgression, this is not the whole
 Truth, nor *the proper Truth* of the Text; which
 speaks of every one of Mankind as born *Flesh*, so
 as to need a being born the second Time, or a
 being thoroughly and spiritually renewed.

3. If Sin is the Cause of Death, and Death is
 the penal Effect of Sin, 'tis not possible, in Con-
 sistence with the moral Perfections of God, for sin-
 less Creatures to be born mortal. *Death*, in every
 Sense

^f To this Purpose Mr T. speaks often.

^g Last of all by the ingenious Author of, *A Vindication of the Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin*, from Mr Taylor's free and candid Examination of it.

Sense of the Word, *is the wages of sin*^h: Sin has the same causal Influence on Death, whoever suffer it, or are obnoxious to it, as the Obedience of *Christ* has on the eternal Life promised in the Gospel.

4. If the Scripture-Account of our natural Condition is to be credited, we are not only born mortal, and frail, but are by Nature Children of Wrath. Regenerate Christians come into the World *such*, and *unclean*, or unrighteous, in the Sight of God. *Ephes. ii. 3. Job xiv. 4.* This then must enter into our Exposition of the Text.

Lastly, Let it be observed, that the Scripture puts our natural Mortality and Corruption on this Foot; our Relation to, concern with, Descent from the first Man *Adam*. In him it is that *all* of Mankind *die*. Through the Offence of that one Man, *many*, *i. e.* all descending from him in a natural Way, *die*. By the disobedience of that one Man the same, *many*, are made Sinners; as Sinners throughout the Apostle's Discourse of Justification is the contrary to *righteous*. So that when the Text says, *that which born of the Flesh is Flesh*; the meaning is not, that Mankind are born corrupt because their next immediate Progenitors were *such*, but our Descent from *them* is the means of our deriving Mortality and a corrupt Nature from our first Father; which *corrupt Nature* in that it overspreads our whole Man, Soul and Body,

^h *Rom. vi. 23.* This Text is emphatical. As *Death* is opposed to *eternal Life*, (which always in the Gospel denotes a State of everlasting Blessedness,) it plainly signifies the three-fold Death aforementioned. This the Apostle having asserted to be justly due to Sin, he does not add as he should have done, according to Mr T. *but eternal Life is the reward of Virtue*. The Apostle no where deals in such high Encomiums of human Virtue, and such low debasing Expressions of the Person and Worthiness of Christ as Mr T's Book contains in it, p. 72, 73, 74, &c. p. 80, 81.

Body, and is derived from *Adam*, is called, *our old Man*; and in that it opposes the holy Spirit's sanctifying Work, and is contrary to the new Nature, the Principle of Grace, inwrought by him, which it strives against in all the actings and workings of it (as the Apostle shews *Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 14. &c.*) for that Reason it is called *Flesh*. *The Flesh* says the Apostle, *lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh: and these two Principles, the in-being and co-working of which are peculiar to the Regenerate in this World, are contrary the one to the other, so that ye, you Galatians and other regenerate Christians cannot do the Things that ye would.* Whatever the Spirit of Grace in a Man inclines him to, that the *Flesh*, or corrupt Nature, is averse to; and whatever the *Spirit* disinclines to and abhors, that the *Flesh* chuses and delights in. This *Flesh* which the *best* feel, lament, abhor in themselves, on all occasions hinders them from loving, and serving their God as they earnestly desire, and above all things chuse to love and serve him. If thou art indeed a regenerate Christian thou feelest, bewailest, abhorrest the unbelief, pride, worldliness, and the various irregular workings, of thy corrupt Heart, not without a fixed strong propensity towards a State of sinless Perfection in the Presence of God, and such a pure spiritual Manner of serving him, as is not to be reached and attained to, how earnestly soever it is desired, in the present Life. — Thus I have gone through the several Parts of the Text, the explaining of which has suggested to us the important Truths following. (1.) *Baptism* and *Regeneration* are absolutely different: As different as the Sign, and the Thing signified thereby: So that the *Baptismal Regeneration* that some plead for, and in their *Baptismal Office* return thanks for, as to every one whom they baptize, is but a Dream.

(2.) The

(2.) The *Spirit of God* is the sole Author of the New Birth. (3.) A Sinner does not become *regenerate* by his gradually acquiring Habits, or Principles, of Virtue and Religion; but by the holy Spirits implanting in him, or breathing into him, a new supernatural Principle of Faith, Love, Repentance, Obedience, antecedently to all truly good Works done by the Sinner himself. (4.) *Regeneration* is of the Nature of spiritual cleansing. (5.) Such a renewing Work of the divine Spirit as is answerable to those Promises of the Covenant, *Psf. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, &c.* is indispensably requisite to present Obedience, and future Blessedness. (6.) We are *by Nature* corrupt degenerate Creatures; from our youngest Childhood averse to what is Good, and strongly inclinable to what is Evil. (7.) The best Christians while in this World, are but imperfectly good; have the meanest Thoughts of themselves; are most sensible of the sinful Corruption that cleaves to them; are most free to acknowledge their own utter Inability, of themselves, to do what is truly good; and find Reason to continue praying as the Psalmist did, *Psal. li. 10. Psal. cxix. 34, 35, 36*; and never to discontinue waiting on God for renewed divine Influences, in Order to their holding out, to the End of their Lives in this World, and living for ever with Christ in that to come.

I conclude with some further Hints of practical Improvement.

1. Since *Baptism* and *Regeneration* are entirely different; let us pity those who are in Danger of being misled (of having their Minds taken off from a due Attention to the Scripture-Account of the *New-Birth*) by being taught from their Childhood,

hood, that “ in Baptism they were made Members of Christ, Children of God,” &c.

2. 'Tis an essential Point of practical Religion to do honour to the holy Spirit as the most High God. To be *born of God*, and to be *born of the Spirit* are the same. The infused Principle that distinguishes sincere Converts, though much exceller in itself than our natural Powers, or any acquired Endowments, is the Spirit's Gift and Workmanship. Let us therefore conceive of *him*, pray to *him*, ascribe Glory to *him* in our Doxologies, sing of *him*, and celebrate *him* in our preaching as the most High God. They who are born of the Spirit are under special Obligations to *this*.

3. How small is the Number of truly regenerate Christians? If any among us seem to be religious, but bridle not their Tongues, don't govern their Appetites and Passions; are not strictly just in all their Dealings with Men; don't make Conscience of attending reverently on the Ordinances of Christ; have not an habitual Sense and Awe of God on their Hearts; and Experience not such a Change as has been imperfectly hinted at, their Religion is vain.

4. Let every one earnestly desire, and frequently pray, to be born from above, and renewed by the Spirit of Christ. Read over the Promises that have been quoted: Consider seriously the Scripture-Account of spiritual Renovation as it has been set before you: Be concerned least you should mistake it, or fall short of an experimental Knowledge of it: Pray daily, with all possible Concern, as the Psalmist did, *Psal. li. 10. Psal. cxix. 5, 33, 34, 35*: Even regenerate Christians themselves,
by

by reason of the remaining Corruption of Nature (which renewing Grace gives them a more affecting Sense of, and a better Knowledge of, than the learnedest Men in the World can have who are not born and taught of the Lord) are warranted and obliged to continue praying, *that* God would create in them a clean Heart, *that* the Lord would direct their Hearts into the Love of God, &c.

5. Let every one apply to himself, and practically improve, what the Text and other Scriptures suggest, as to the native Corruption of Man since the Fall, and the absolute Need of spiritual Renovation arising from thence. Every one might and should think seriously with himself as follows.

“ I have been born Flesh of Flesh : I came into
“ the World guilty and ungodly as a Child of
“ *Adam* : From my earliest Childhood I was averse
“ to what is truly good, and strongly inclinable
“ to what is evil, in the Sight of God : Whatever
“ I am at present, I was by Nature a Child of
“ Wrath : It concerns me to repent of, *i. e.* to
“ mourn over, to confess to God, to abhor and
“ loath myself for, to ask pardon for, and ear-
“ nestly cry to God for Deliverance from, the sin-
“ ful Pollution of Nature, which has descended
“ to me from the first Transgression of my sinning
“ federal Head. In him I was originally righ-
“ teous, and I defy any of the Learned to disprove
“ this : In him I fell : From him I derive Guilt
“ and a corrupt Nature, serious Reviews of which
“ forbid all proud Conceits of my own Goodness,
“ moral Abilities, &c. teach me that I am no
“ Way able to form myself anew, and that if I
“ am created unto good Works, the saving
“ Change must be ascribed with humble Thank-
“ fulness to free distinguishing Mercy, to the Re-
“ deemer's Blood, and to the holy Spirit's effectual

44 *A Discourse on John iii. 5, 6.*

“ Working: If I am a true regenerate Christian,
“ I must never forget who and what it is that has
“ made me such an one. God grant I may not
“ be a mistaken, deceiving, Hypocrite.” It should
be the great Concern of every one thoroughly to
know himself, to experience the Efficacy of God’s
renewing Grace, and to be by his mighty Power
preserved safe to his heavenly Kingdom.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THREE different false Accounts have been given of the Nature of *Regeneration*. Two of them are struck at, and a little confuted, in the foregoing Discourse.

One is this. To be *born again*, is by Degrees to acquire an Habit or Principle of true Religion; which, say the *Socinians* and other Asserters of this Opinion, every Man in the World, as made by God a rational free Agent, has it in his Power to do. When a Man does *so* exert his natural Abilities, and *so* improve the external Helps granted to every one, more or less, by a merciful Providence, as to attain to an Habit of Goodness, a Principle of true Religion, then he becomes regenerate, is born of the Spirit; the good Spirit readily concurring with every one who desires and endeavours to be virtuous and religious. This is Mr *J. Taylor's* Account of Regeneration, in his late Book against *Original Sin*. How far this may be excepted against, I shew in the preceding Discourse.

A Second false Tenet as to the Nature of *Regeneration* is this. It consists of two Things; *Baptism*, and an *internal Renovation*. This some great and good Men, both Antients and Moderns, plead for; grounding this Notion of theirs chiefly on *John* iii. 5. *Tit.* iii. 5. which two Texts I have a little

In Proof of Baptism
See John 3.

little endeavoured to rescue out of their Hands, by showing, as to the *former*, that there is good Reason to believe it does not at all refer, or allude, to the outward Baptism; as to the *latter* that Baptism may indeed be therein alluded to, but what the Apostle means by *washing of Regeneration*, is probably the same with the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which Holy Ghost being like Water poured out upon us in *Regeneration*, on that Account we may, with Propriety, be said to be *born of Water and the Spirit*; or the *Spirit*, whose Influence is, like that of Water, cleansing and purifying.

A third Mistake as to *Regeneration* I meet with in some modern, as well as antient, Books. To be *born again*, or which is the same thing, to be *born of Water and the Spirit*, it is not to be inwardly renewed by the Spirit, together with Baptism, but it is to be “ translated out of a State of Nature, “ the State which we are born in as the Children “ of *Adam*, into a State of Pardon and Grace, in “ the Use of, or by Means of, Christian Baptism.” This Tenet is clogged with the following Absurdities.

1. It confounds *Regeneration* with *Justification* or *Pardon*, which the Word of God gives no Countenance to, that we can discover.

2. It distinguishes *Regeneration* from an inward Renovation, making it a different Thing from the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which indeed may precede it, or accompany it, or be the Consequent of it, but is as different from it as a relative and an inherent Change are, if some are not mistaken.

3. It implies all baptized Infants being, in this Sense, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, *i. e.* translated out

out of the State of Guilt and Wrath, into which we are born, into a State of present Pardon, and Acceptance with God; upon which, how wicked soever they prove afterwards, they have no need of being *born again*; but only of Repentance and Conversion, from which, according to this Opinion, *Regeneration* is greatly different.

4. It subverts the Nature and contradicts the true Design of the Sacraments of the New Covenant; for these don't really *confer* Grace of any kind, but signify and seal it. —

That *Regeneration*, and *bringing Persons into a State of Pardon*, are not the same; and that *Regeneration* is the same with the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, I prove from the following Scriptures, *John* iii. 6. *James* i. 18. 1 *Pet.* i. 23. with which *Tit.* iii. 5. may be compared.

John iii. 6. Our Lord opposes, as we have heard, *Flesh* and *Spirit*, with a being born of *one* and the *other*. To be born *Flesh*, it is to be born corrupt or unholy; *Flesh* being put for the Corruption of Nature that we derive from *Adam*, or the corrupt evil Principle that every one does or may feel in himself. Though *Guilt* and *Corruption* are inseparable, they are distinct, and 'tis not the former but the latter that is called *Flesh*, as has been shown. Now this shows what it is to be *born Spirit of Spirit*. It is not to be *forgiven*, but *inwardly changed*. If to be *Flesh of Flesh* is to be the corrupt sinful Offspring of Parents defiled with Sin; to be *born Spirit of Spirit* (the same with *Regeneration*) it is to be made spiritual, or new Creatures, by the Spirit of God.

James i. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of First Fruits of his Creatures.* Does not this speak of *Regeneration*? Does not the Apostle speak of it as

making

not as a man a son of man, but as the Father of all

making a real inherent Change? 'Tis of God's own Will, according to *John* i. 13. and *2 Tim.* i. 9. 'Tis by means of the Word of God, as Faithⁱ and Sanctification^k are elsewhere said to be. By his Word, as a Means, God begets us, or renews us, that we may be a People dedicated to God, and set apart for him.

1 Pet. i. 23. *Being born again not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God.*—Compare this with *John* i. 13. *1 John* iii. 9. *James* i. 18. The Spirit of God when he regenerates a Man, what does he do for him? He injects an incorruptible Seed or Principle, which the Apostle *John* calls *his Seed*. This abideth in the regenerate Person, and is implanted in him when he is born of God, or regenerated by him, *1 John* iii. 9. With these plain Texts, compare that in *Tit.* iii. 5. where the Apostle distinctly mentions indeed *washing of Regeneration*, and *renewing of the Holy Ghost*. But he might not therefore intend to represent them as two things really different. Is not, *and*, often exegetical? So it appears to be *here*, upon comparing this with the other Texts already explained.

That neither adult Persons nor Infants are regenerated in *Baptism*, ordinarily, is evident to us, from the Premises, together with the Nature, and End, of *Sacraments* as plainly stated in the Scripture. *John* iii. 5. One of the Texts, on which this *Baptismal Regeneration* is grounded, says nothing of *Baptism* as has been proved. *Tit.* iii. 5. does indeed allude to *Baptism*: But it is questionable whether it directly speaks of it. However granting that it does, and that *washing of Regeneration* is indeed *Baptism*, even this, instead of confirming the darling Tenet of some, proves the contrary. For *Baptism* might be so described, as
it.

ⁱ Rom. x. 17.

^k John xvii. 17.

it is a Sign of Regeneration. A Sign may bear the Name of the thing signified. So it does in this Text, according to some, as it does also with some of the *Antients*. — What the Efficacy of *Baptism* is, we reasonably infer from what the Apostle says of the antient *Circumcision*, which was once a Seal of the same Covenant that is now sealed by Baptism, as our Divines irrefragably prove in their Disputes with the *Antipedobaptists*. Rom. iv. 11. *And he received the Sign of Circumcision, a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith.* — Circumcision was a Sign, of what? of Regeneration, or of God's taking a Person into Covenant with himself, or both. That it was an appointed Token of *this* latter, we find Gen. xvii. 11. That it was ordained to be an outward Sign or Symbol of *Regeneration*, or spiritual Renovation, we gather from hence, that *this* is sometimes called by the Name of *Circumcision*. 'Tis the Circumcision of the Heart that we sometimes read of. *Again*, It was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith. So it was to *Abraham*, and other true upright Believers. It sealed the Blessing of *Remission*, or *Justification*, to all such. In like Manner, *Baptism*, as ordained by Christ, instead of the antiquated Sign and Seal of *Circumcision*, is a Sign of Regeneration, and a visible Token of God's taking into Covenant every one to whom he would have it to be administered. 'Tis also a Seal of Justification: 'Tis called *the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins*; in as much as it is an Obligation to Repentance laid on them who partake of it; and it seals the Blessing of Forgiveness to every sincere penitent Believer, as Circumcision did to *Abraham* and his spiritual Seed formerly. Is not this a plain scriptural Account of the Efficacy of *Baptism*? If any pretend that the Efficacy of Baptism *now* is greater than that of Circumcision *formerly*, let them prove

it. Was *Circumcision* a Token of the Covenant between God and his People; so is *Baptism* now. Was *Circumcision* a Sign of Regeneration; so is *Baptism* now. Was *Circumcision* a Seal of Justification, or Remission of Sins, to such as *Abraham* was, or sincere Believers; so is *Baptism* now. It is not ordained to be a *Means* of Forgiveness but to be a *Seal* of it; in which Sense we read of it's being administred for the Remission of Sins. Thus we are to understand what *Ananias* said to *Saul*, Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins:" *i. e.* Partake of Baptism as a Token and Seal of God's having already pardoned thy Sins. *Saul* was already a Convert and forgiven. Baptism then was not to put him into a State of Pardon and Grace, but to be to him a Seal of the Righteousness of the Faith which he had while as yet unbaptized.

The Children of God's People are indeed said to be *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Rom. xi. 16. and, "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mat. xix. 14. But this makes nothing for the *Baptismal Regeneration* which some dream of. The *Holiness* ascribed to *such*, is not either an inherent saving Holiness, or a being in a State of Pardon and Grace by means of Baptism: It is an Holiness that descends from Parents in Covenant with God to their Children: It arises not from Baptism, but from the Covenant as established with Believers and their Seed: 'Tis a relative federal Holiness; is prior to Baptism; and gives a Right to the partaking of it. The Children of God's People are baptized not in Order to their being made Members of the visible Church, and federally holy, but because they are so before, by Virtue of the Covenant. This is the true Scripture-Ground of *Infant Baptism*, which the Asserters of Baptismal Regeneration are ignorant, or inconsiderate of.

Since

Since *Regeneration* is the same with an *internal spiritual Renovation*, as has been shown, if Infants were *regenerated*, they would be *renewed* too by means of Baptism. But what Evidence is there of this? Are not the Children of God's People, the baptized of them as well as others, averse to what is good, and inclinable to what is evil, from their youngest Childhood? — According to the Scripture, *Pardon* and *Sanctification* go together. If Baptism therefore conveys *Pardon*, it must confer *Sanctification* also. If it is not an effectual sanctifying Ordinance, 'tis not, it cannot be, a pardoning one. The Truth is, 'tis *neither*. 'Tis not ordained for either of these Purposes; but to be such a *Sign* and *Seal* as Circumcision was in old Time. This I imagine, every one will be disposed to believe who is convinced that our Lord speaks nothing of *Baptism* in *John* iii. 5. and *that* is proved in the foregoing Sermon.

Much more might be offered, if there was Room. But I would not break off without some Citations from the *Fathers*, because the Asserters of *Baptismal Regeneration* build not a little on *their* Testimonies, and profess to be pretty much directed by *them*. I begin with the most antient one next after the New Testament.

Clemens Romanus speaking of *Noah*, says, “*Noah* being found faithful, by his Ministry, preached “*Regeneration to the World.*” Here (1.) The Word, *Liturgy*, is applied to the preaching of *Noah*; and (2.) *Regeneration* is put for, Repentance, or Conversion, or spiritual Renovation¹. Did that Preacher of Righteousness, as the Scripture calls him, invite the Sinners of the old World to be *baptized*? What can his preaching *Regene-*

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¹ Νῶε πρὸς εὐρεθεὶς διὰ τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ παλιγγεννησὶαν κόσμῳ ἐκήρυσσεν, καὶ, &c. *Clem. Epist. ad Corinth.* cap. 9.

ration to them signify, but his calling them to Repentance, his exhorting them to turn to God, his declaring to them the Necessity of an inward Renovation and an outward Reformation?

Justin Martyr, speaking of those who were persuaded to believe the Gospel, and engaged to live accordingly, says, “ They are brought to a Place “ where Water is, and regenerated after the same “ Manner^m of Regeneration, in which we ourselves were regenerated. For they are baptized “ *in the Name of*, &c. Christ having said. If ye “ are not regenerated ye shall not enter into the “ Kingdom of Heaven.” Here it must be granted, *regenerated* is put for *baptized*, and *John* iii. 3. is understood of Baptism. This seems to make for *Baptismal Regeneration*. But perhaps all that we can fairly gather from *Justin’s* Words is this. Inasmuch as a *Sign* may bear the Name of what is signified by it, and Baptism is a Sign of Regeneration, or spiritual renewing, for that Reason he says of the *baptized*, that they are *regenerated*. The Persons whom he there speaks of being reputed sincere Believersⁿ, already converted and forgiven, they were thought proper Persons to be baptized, and baptized they were, not in Order to their being forgiven, but in Token of their being already regenerated and pardoned. *Baptism* may fitly enough be called *Regeneration*, if it be understood agreeably to the usual Manner of putting

^m Τερον αναγεννησεως ου και ημεις αναγεννηθημεν.

ⁿ The Passage above-cited is introduced thus. “ When any “ are persuaded to believe what we teach, and consent to live “ accordingly, και βιβν εως δυναδς υποσχωμεθα, “ they are exhorted to pray and to ask with Fasting the Forgiveness of their past Sins, we joining with them in Prayer “ and Fasting.” See here a Specimen of the Discipline of the Church, about the middle of the II^d Century, while several corrupt Tenets and Superstitions afterwards introduced, were as yet unknown.

ting the Thing signified for that which is the Sign of it. For,

Clement of Alexandria sometimes calls Baptism a Sign of Regeneration; and in another Place speaks thus. "The Father of the Universe entertains
" them who fly to him, and having regenerated
" them by the Spirit to Adoption, he knows them
" to be of a gentle Disposition^o; and them only
" he loves, assists and fights for." Observe, *those whom he regenerates he knows to be of a gentle Disposition, loves, assists, fights for.* Can any pretend that *Clement* here by *regenerates* means *baptizes*?

Again, He says, "The Heathen Philosophers
" express, teaching, and enlightning, by regenera-
" ting." And he himself elsewhere applies this same Word to *Conversion*, and *Repentance*, in the plainest Manner possible. For speaking of a lewd Woman he says. "She lives unto Sin, but is
" dead to the Commands; but when she repents,
" being regenerated, in regard to a Change of
" Behaviour, she has the Regeneration of Life^p;
" she being dead as to her past Adultery, but
" regenerated by Repentance." In which Passage, by *Regeneration of Life*, is meant such a Change as tendeth to Life, or such an inward Renovation as fits and prepares for eternal Life. The adulterous Woman, when changed and brought to Repentance, is expressly said to be *regenerated thereby*, in Contradiction to our modern Asserters of Baptismal Regeneration, who boldly and inconsiderately affirm, again and again, that there is a mighty Difference between *Regeneration* and *Conversion*^q,
and

^o Αναγεννησας πνευματι εις υιοθεσίαν ημεις οιδεν. *Pædag.* lib. 1.

^p Μετανοουσα, οιοει αναγεννηθεισα κατὰ την επισφορν τῆ Βίῃ, παλιγγεννησίαν εχει Ζωῆς. *Stromat.* lib. 5.

^q Some modern Asserters of Baptismal Regeneration sometimes speak, as though they took these two to be the same,

and that whenever the Antients speak of the former, they always mean *Baptism*, by it.

Tertullian speaks of Christians as born again, by means of the Law or Instruction of the Word of God. The Passage I refer to is like much of this Author, crabbed and obscure. For a long Time I knew not what to make of it, till finding it quoted by Dr *Gale*, in his *Reflexions on Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, who understands it as alluding to the *Decalogue*, and translates it thus. We are born in the same Number of Months, as we are regenerated by Precepts^r.

Eusebius, or rather *Clement* of *Alexandria*, as quoted by him, says of a certain Apostate, recovered and brought to Repentance by means of the Discourses and Prayers of the Apostle *John*; that he was a remarkable Example of Repentance, and a remarkable Instance of Regeneration. The last Sentence of the Account given by *Eusebius*, as in the Words of *Clement*, runs thus. “ When he
“ the Apostle, had poured forth many Prayers
“ for him, and softened his Heart by several Discourses with him, and confirmed, or strengthened him, he departed not, as is reported, till
“ he had fully restored him to the Church, presenting them with a great Example of Repentance,” and a great Proof of Regeneration^r, and a singular Instance of the visible Resurrection.

Irenæus,

at other Times they speak differently, thereby showing that when they put *Regeneration* and *Conversion* together, they mean only this, that *Regeneration*, or, a being born of Water and the Spirit, is not sufficient without a Conversion of the Heart, or an inward Renovation, in the Case of grown Persons.

^r *Tertullian's* Words are, “ Tanto temporis numero, quanto disciplinæ numero renascimur.”

^r Μεγα παραδειγμα μελανοιας αληθινης, και μεγα γνωρισμα παλιγγενειας. *Euseb. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 23.*
In some Books that I have seen, cap. 20.

Irenæus, of our Lord, says. “ Being a Master he also had the Age of a Master. — For he came to save all by himself: all, I mean, who by him are regenerated unto God; Infants, little Children, Youth, and elder Persons.” This has been often cited against the *Antipedobaptists*. It was urged in the last Age by Dr *Owen*^t, Mr *Baxter*, and others. Since that Dr *Wall* has inserted it in his *History of Infant Baptism*. ’Tis one of the Passages usually quoted to support the Practice of baptizing Infants from antient Testimonies; *Baptism* being, say these learned *Pedobaptists*, often called *Regeneration* by the Antients, and *Irenæus* here speaking of *Infants* and *little ones* as, together with Persons of other Ages, *regenerated* or baptized. But though *Baptism* may be here alluded to, it does not seem to be directly intended. The *all* whom Christ came to save are said to be *regenerated to God*. Can this be meant of *Baptism*? Are none saved but such as are *baptized*? Or, are all who are baptized saved by Christ? That must be the Case, according to *Irenæus*, if *Regeneration* was here put for *Baptism*: For he evidently intimates that, all whom Christ came to save are regenerated, and that all who are regenerated to God are saved. A plain Proof this, supposing the Passage to be genuine, that *Irenæus* did not believe *universal Redemption* in the modern *Arminian* Sense, and that he had no Notion of the *Baptismal Regeneration* since devised.

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^t See, *Collection of Dr Owen’s Sermons and Tracts*, pag. 579, where he vindicates this Passage as an early Testimony to Infant Baptism, against Mr *Tombs*. So does Mr *Baxter* in his *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership and Baptism*, a most excellent Book never yet fairly answered; as, I imagine, the main of it never will nor can; — though I can’t help questioning whether the Passage of *Irenæus* is so clear and full in favour of *Pedobaptism* as these, and other learned Men, suppose.

There are indeed several Passages that seem to favour this Tenet, how ill-grounded and unscriptural soever, in *Cyprian* with his Cotemporaries, and many other following Writers. But how strongly soever they seem to assert this, or the absolute Necessity of the outward Baptism, and what grand Encomiums soever they give of Baptism, calling it *Regeneration*, *Grace*, *Redemption*, the *Salutary Laver*, &c. notwithstanding all this, their suffering some Persons so long to put off their being baptized, their allowing some who died unbaptized to be in Heaven; these things, with some incidental Passages extant in their Writings, particularly those quoted from *Augustin* in the foregoing Sermon, would incline one to think, that at the Bottom they did not mean to ascribe so much to Baptism as they commonly seemed to do; and that they looked upon this Ordinance of Christ as a *Sign of Regeneration*, and a *Seal of Forgiveness*, to true penitent Believers, rather than as Regeneration itself, and an effectual Means of Pardon itself, in the Case of any. Be that as it will; The Scripture is our Rule, not the Writings of the Fathers. Whatever *these* seemingly or really assert, we think it easily provable, and already proved from the Scriptures of Truth, *that* the Sacraments don't confer Grace, but are only Signs and Seals of promised spiritual Blessings; *that* Baptism is not Regeneration, but an external Sign of it, and a Seal of Remission to true penitent Believers, as Circumcision was in old Time, *Rom. iv. 11. that* Regeneration and Conversion, or inward Renovation, are the same both in the Scripture, and some of the antienter Fathers; and *that* the *Baptismal Regeneration*, which many so warmly contend for, is a groundless Fancy.

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